

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9501

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: JACQUES CHIRAC SPEECH BEFORE UDR PARLIAMENTARI-
IANS

REF: PARIS 8788

SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIRAC HAS BEEN HITTING
THE LEFT HARD IN HIS RECENT SPEECHES. HE IMPLIED BEFORE
UDR PARLIAMENTARIANS ASSEMBLED IN SAINT-JEAN-DE-LUZ
THAT HE WOULD STEP DOWN AS PRIME MINISTER AFTER THE 1978
LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIRAC ADDRESSED A UDR
PARLIAMENTARIANS' CONFERENCE ON APRIL 1. THIS WAS HIS
THIRD MAJOR SPEECH SINCE BEING NAMED LEADER OF THE
MAJORITY BY PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING ON MARCH 24 AND
FITS INTO THE CONTEXT OF THE INCREASINGLY ACTIVE POLITI-
CAL ROLE THAT CHIRAC CAN BE EXPECTED TO TAKE IN THE
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COMING MONTHS. IN A FEW DAYS CHIRAC WILL ADDRESS

CENTRIST DEPUTIES, GIVING HIM, IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS AFTER HIS NEW DESIGNATION, APPEARANCES BEFORE ALL THREE MAJORITY POLITICAL FACTIONS.

2. CHIRAC'S ADDRESS WAS A CAMPAIGN SPEECH DELIBERATELY INTENDED TO COUNTERATTACK THE LEFT AND THE GROWING THREAT THAT IT REPRESENTS IN THE FRENCH POLITICAL ARENA. ALTHOUGH GISCARD HAD JUST PLEADED WITH POLITICIANS FIVE DAYS EARLIER NOT TO TRANSFORM FRANCE INTO A STATE OF PERMANENT POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING, CHIRAC, AFTER DISCUSSING THE NECESSITY TO REINFORCE THE ECONOMY AND PUSH ESSENTIAL REFORMS, WENT ON TO HIT THE COMMON PROGRAM HARD. "IT IS ONLY", HE SAID, "LENIN-LIKE REMARKS AND DEMAGOGIC PROMISES.....THAT CONSTITUTE THE BASIS OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND THE COMMUNISTS." AFTER HIS SPEECH, CHIRAC SAID TO SOME COLLEAGUES THAT HE HAD "A CERTAIN NUMBER OF THINGS TO SAY TO MR. MITTERRAND" AND THAT HE WAS GOING TO ATTACK OPENLY THE OPPOSITION. ALL MAJOR FIGURES IN THE UDR, INCLUDING JACQUES CHABAN-DELMAS, WERE PRESENT FOR THE PARLIAMENTARIANS' RALLY. CHABAN HAS BEEN COOL TO CHIRAC SINCE THE LATTER GAVE HIS SUPPORT TO VGE IN THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

3. INTERESTINGLY, CHIRAC LET IT BE UNDERSTOOD THAT HE WOULD STEP DOWN, BOTH FROM HIS ROLE AS LEADER OF THE MAJORITY AND FROM THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP AFTER THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THIS SHOULD PUT TO REST EARLIER RUMORS THAT CHIRAC MIGHT RESIGN AFTER THE 1977 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

4. COMMENT: WHILE THE PRESENCE OF CHIRAC AT HIS OWN PARTY'S CONVENTION MAY NOT BE SIGNIFICANT IN ITSELF, HIS FIGHTING SPEECH DOES UNDERSCORE THE NEW TONE AND ROLE THAT HE IS TAKING IN FRENCH POLITICS. AT HIS VARIOUS SPEECHES TO THE UDR, TO THE IR AND TO THE PATRONAT, HE HAS BEEN GREETED WITH ENTHUSIASM. ONLY THE CENTRISTS SEEM TO HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS, NOT SO MUCH THE LECANUET REFORMIST CAMP, BUT RATHER GABRIEL PERONNET'S RADICAL SOCIALISTS. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO NOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOW CHIRAC ADDRESSES THE CENTRIST CONVENTION AND HOW HE WILL APPEASE CENTRIST FEARS THAT GOF'S INTERNAL POLICIES ARE TAKING ON A SOMEWHAT MORE GAULLIST TONE.
RUSH

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